



U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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News Advisory

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Sensenbrenner Statement on Administration's Announcement Today on Implementation of Visa Waiver Program Deadlines

Sensenbrenner: Today's Clarification to VWP Countries Critical to Enforcement of More Secure Passport Requirements

WASHINGTON, D.C. - House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wis.), a key author of the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform of 2002 (P.L. 107-173), issued the following statement following today's announcement of the Bush administration's policy addressing the pending October 26 deadlines:

"I fully support the Bush administration's announcement today enforcing the biometric requirements for more secure passports as required by Congress. The administration's policy will clarify what countries need to do to comply so as to address confusion about the biometric passport requirements among the countries affected.

"The administration should be commended for moving ahead to strengthen VWP program oversight, and for taking a deliberative approach to the deployment of the technology to read passports and confirm their validity. The approach taken by the administration embodies the intent of the statute.

"Establishing a conference that will take VWP countries into the precise details of benchmark passport security standards should prove invaluable and leave no doubt as to how the VWP countries must move forward. Furthermore, today's policy requirement

that VWP countries identify their own responsible officials for compliance certification will assist in clarifying lines of accountability and foster better lines of communication going forward as these security requirements are put in place.

“There has been a lot of speculation as to which countries will be in compliance with the deadlines by October 26, 2005. By the end of the summer, there should be little doubt by VWP country governments, by businesses, or by the travel industry as to how each VWP country will be affected when that date arrives.

“I very much appreciate the close consultation that has taken place with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State, and express my thanks for the White House’s active involvement in managing a forceful policy to close security vulnerabilities in the VWP program.”

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